

play with success the *role* of the beneficent ruler, and, in any case, his good intentions were frustrated by an outbreak of rebellion in the west and east, in which the seething religious and social discontent exploded once more with sufficiently menacing effects. The new liturgy, known as the First Prayer Book of King Edward, was to be introduced in all churches on Whitsunday, the 9th June 1549. The villagers of Sampford Courtenay compelled their priest to say mass in Latin, and before the month was ended the people of Devonshire and Cornwall were in open revolt. Ten thousand Cornish-men were on the march to Exeter, and forced Sir Peter Carew, who had been sent to maintain order, to retire into Somersetshire. In a series of articles they demanded the restoration of the Catholic ceremonies and the suppression of heresy by the sword, the disuse of the English Bible, the nomination of Cardinal Pole to a seat in the Council, and the partial appropriation of the abbey lands to religious uses. The tenor of these articles reveals the hand of the clerical agitator, but the clerical agitator, with so much discontent seething in every county of England, was not a person to be trifled with; and though Somerset, who sympathised with the practical grievances of the masses that made the clerical agitator so dangerous, hesitated, he was overruled by the Council into a policy of indiscriminate repression. Lords Russell and Grey were accordingly commissioned to deal with the western insurgents as rebels. Grey enforced the arguments by which Peter Martyr was disturbing the peace of Oxford University by hanging recalcitrant priests from the church towers throughout the county. He then hurried westwards to reinforce Russell in the attempt to relieve Exeter, which was besieged by the men of Cornwall and Devon. It was only after a series of desperate combats by their united forces that Exeter was relieved, and the insurgents slaughtered into submission.

The insurrectionary spirit spread into the eastern and midland counties, and as far north as Yorkshire, but in the east it was stirred by agrarian discontent pure and simple, and had leaders of a very different stamp from the reactionary priests of Devon and Cornwall. The anger of the people at the social and economic abuses of which they were the victims.